

READING AND NARRATIVE FICTION

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THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

YOUNG PEOPLE'S READING

- Reading enjoyment and frequency decreases with age
- Many children and young people don't see themselves in what they read

26% of young people aged 11–14 read daily out of school

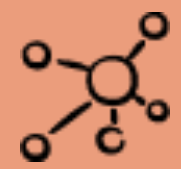


(Cole et al., 2022; Picton & Clark, 2022)

ADOLESCENCE



IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL EXPERIENCES



EXPLORATION



AUTONOMY



(Erikson, 1968)

READING FICTION



SOCIAL COGNITION

(Eekhof et al., 2022)



READER-RESPONSE THEORY

(Rosenblatt, 1995)



MIRRORS, WINDOWS, AND SLIDING GLASS DOORS

(Bishop, 1990)



RESEARCH QUESTIONS



To what extent, and how, does narrative fiction support and develop adolescents' understanding of themselves and others?



To what extent do adolescent readers engage in reflective literacy practices?

**Semi-
structured
interviews**

**Young
people's
fiction reading
experiences**

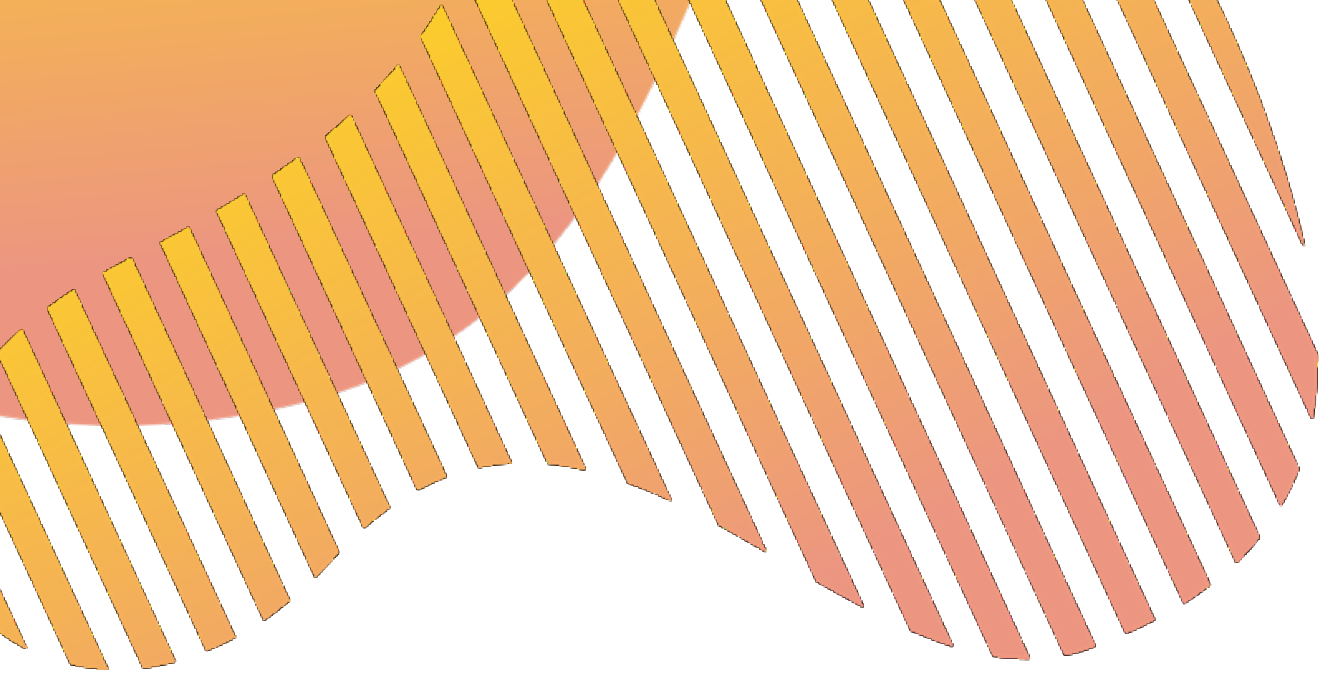
**37 avid readers
(12-14 y.o.)**

**Perceptions of
the potential
benefits of
narrative fiction**

**Implemented
reflective
literacy
practices**

**Inductive
approach to
Thematic Analysis**

The study was
preregistered:
<https://osf.io/h4xu2>

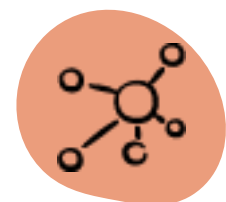


FINDINGS



Mirror

Relating to characters

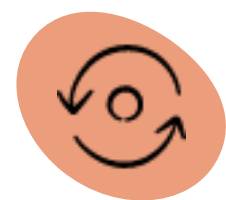


... real and fantasy



... not identical to themselves

Importance of representation



... of minority experiences



... of difficult situations/experiences

Benefits



Feeling of not being alone



Realising something new

- ... about what they are going through
- ... about themselves
- ... about others

Feelings



Fear and excitement



Happiness

- Feeling better about themselves
- Feeling represented and important

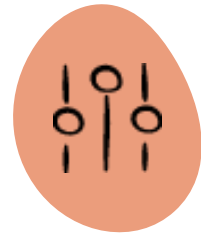
Yeah, there is, like, a few of those that, like, I realised that that person was going through the same thing that I went through that I didn't know that I was going through, so, like, kind of show me the reality of my life [AA]

There's been some books where I didn't really, like, realise that's the way you could be, and it kinda made me feel better about myself 'cause, like, I acted a lot like them [BG]

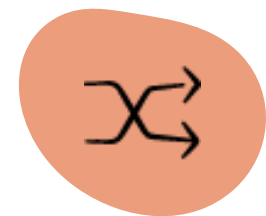


Window

Learning about others



Everyone is different and has different perspectives



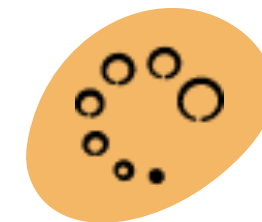
Learning about others' experiences and perspectives

- Minority groups' possible experiences
- Difficult situations in general
- People's perspectives and experiences in the past

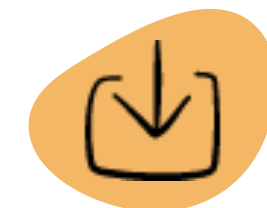
From fiction to real life



Understanding other people better



Realising something new about someone they know



Impact on the reader's behaviour

- Changing something about themselves/their behaviour
- Learning to think about others
- Being thoughtful when interacting with others

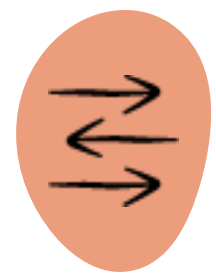


That people are different and unique in their own way, and that everyone has their life, and not everybody's the same as you. [AH]

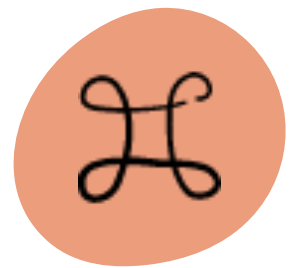
[...] when you read these books with loads of other characters that you learn about, third person books, you realise how, the way other people are interacting and being with you and how they're feeling, and it it definitely does, like, awaken you a bit to the way other people feel besides just how you feel as a person. [...] And the way that other people, like, perceive things that you say to them. [...] And, like, the tone you say in, that's another one. It's just, obviously, it's helped a lot with, like, the way I talk to people, the way I interact, I would say. Definitely helped. [BN]

Sliding glass door

Empathising with characters



... different from themselves



... similar or with similar experiences

Effects



Getting involved emotionally



Understanding the character's behaviour and choices



Empathising with real people

Yeah, like, because, see if in, especially in high school, if someone says something, it's really easy for them, it's really easy for other people to laugh or belittle their problems, but then when you read a book, you really get to see how that impacts them, and then it makes you more, uhm...like, it gives you more empathy towards situations and people who might experience them. [BL]

My friend...who lived back at where I used to live at...Their...Their...their parent...his, his grandma died. And when I was reading about Batman, it made me realize how much, how sad he must have been...and then...I realized that it's important for other people to try find out what other people's lives are like to make sure they feel better and not go through...a lonely phase...that make them feel like they are not...they aren't surrounded by people. So, yeah... [AH]



NEXT STEPS

01

Meetings with young people

02

Meetings with high school literacy staff

03

Meetings with literacy associations

**Co-creation of a reflective
literacy practices guide**

References

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THANK YOU

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LiteracyLab webpage



BERA blog



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